

To: [berthoff@comcast.net](mailto:berthoff@comcast.net).

Date: Wed/15/Oct/03

From: [mavawsec@yahoo.com](mailto:mavawsec@yahoo.com)

## REPLY TO BERT HOFF

Hello Bert,

Please accept my sincere thank you, for your quick response and frank comments to/on my Email "Men Against Violence Against Women". Let me also acknowledge here my deep appreciation for your work in maintaining "Men Web" and David Troops' efforts in The Men's' Issues opus. These resources will forever be a tremendous help to all men working on issues which affect men, be it abuse to them, from them, to and from their loved ones and to the environment. Another site to note is [www.menagainstviolence.com](http://www.menagainstviolence.com). The other Email to you, mentioned November 19<sup>th</sup>, the annual celebration, locally and in the Caribbean of "International Men's Day". My wish is that you hold no objection to this celebration and spread the word to the best of your ability.

The philosophy underpinning reduction and elimination of unacceptable violence, in my view, must accept different methodologies, presentation styles and degrees of healing by the persons involved; all based on their personal levels of emotional, physical and spiritual maturity.

Many men, on first hearing about MAVAW and reading our documents, get the impression that we do not realize the full extent of abuse to men or support them to the same degree, as we do women. A closer perusal of our Formal Documents and our History will show quite the opposite.

For the past five years MAVAW (Men Against Violence Against Women) has been operating a 24-hour HOTLINE 1-868-637-0924 with mailbox and cell phone 1-868-753-0804, so that we can testify to the pain and suffering of both men and women experiencing violence in their relationships. Our members sat on the Cabinet appointed Committee, which reviewed our Domestic Violence Legislation. MAVAW men now sit on the Cabinet appointed Committee, which is analyzing the Status of the Family in Trinidad and Tobago. Our Crime Statistics predominantly record offences by violent young males, a serious concern to us as men, fathers, uncles, brothers, nephews, grandfathers and adults. At last count, 5,494 men were incarcerated in our Prison system and 216 women. A fact we aggressively requested to be noted by the formulators of the first National Gender Policy. As our Documents state "We Want Change Not Exchange"

Every Judge, Master of the High Court, Justice of the Peace, Magistrate, Library, Parliamentarian, Calypsonian, Media House and many NGO's to name a few have a copy of our 2002 Domestic Violence Awareness Handbook. On every occasion possible and there is a very interactive media component here; we challenge men and women on their gender insensitive statements. MAVAW coordinated a 13-week radio programme titled "Talking Gender" emphasizing how both men and women are affected equally by violence in relationships.

At present there are five very important projects, which are getting the support of Men Against Violence Against Women: -

1. Publication of a textbook by member Dr. Russell Foote, "Roots Of Youth Aggression: Home, School and Multilevel Interventions",
2. International Men's Day by friend and supporter of MAVAW PhD candidate Jerome Teelucksingh.
3. "Men's TV" a one hour television programme for men, hosted by member Dr. Robert Moultrie, with half hour interviews and half hour public interaction.
4. The BSD Syndrome Concept, our most important and "people issue" to date (explained below in part, which in my view is the future of Domestic Violence analysis and discussion).
5. A Bumper Sticker Programme, utilizing our most poignant "One Liners.

This **Syndrome** will eliminate the terms now used in the **Violence In Relationships Arena**, terms like **victim, batterer, perpetrator, domestic violence** etc. Within the **BSD Syndrome**, you will understand that Violence In Relationships is a paradoxical issue...Characteristics, which have already been well documented elsewhere, now come together under the umbrella of a Syndrome, and paradoxically, what is considered abusive as “outwards behaviour” is complemented and also considered abusive as “acceptance behaviour”, recording the fact that both parties in the relationship have BSD’s. These Characteristics can be explained under 4 Heads, which time and space allows for brief mention here: -

1. Belief System Deficit (BSD)
2. Behaviour Skill Deficit (BSD)
3. Baggage System Dependency (BSD)
4. Biological System Deficit (BSD) and these are the negative components in the Syndrome. The positive action within the Syndrome also termed BSD’s, but refer to methodologies utilized to accomplish Development: -
5. Belief System Development.
6. Behaviour Skill Development
7. Baggage System Development and
8. Biological System Development.

This concept scientifically places the Violence In Relationships Issue, into a medium that takes away the stigma and **gender polarizing** associated with its treatment in the past. We anticipate resistance to this concept by some women, primarily because every statistic, which lists one person being hurt, will also have to list the other person causing the pain, as being hurt too. A lot of women will find that hard to accept, but we hope that in few years time this will change.

In the past MAVAW actively co-hosted **Male Awareness Week** in December, **Fathers’ Week** in June and fully support the entire Women’s Days here. In Canada during the year 2000, we were actively involved with planning the first **Dad Walk** by the White Ribbon Campaign. This year they celebrated their 4<sup>th</sup> **Dad Walk** on the 15<sup>th</sup> June at the Toronto Zoo. <http://www.whiteribbon.com>. We were also instrumental in changing one Canadian Government programme from “**Male Batterers Programme**” to “**Spousal Abuse Programme**”. In Suriname during November 2002, one of the feminist’s organisations there, which has progressed to the “people issue” stage, **Foundation Stop Violence Against Women, Director Tienke Sumter**, Email [stopgeweld@sr.net](mailto:stopgeweld@sr.net), invited us to participate in a 3-day conference and provide a 4-day training programme for their NGO Sector in the following areas: -

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Domestic Violence Awareness. | 2. Parenting                              |
| 3. Healthy Relationships.       | 4. Domestic Violence and Interior Design. |

The conference Theme was **“Development= Change: From Women Counseling To System Oriented Counseling”** and my presentation was titled “The Role Of Men Against Violence Against Women”. Let me acknowledge that it was at a training session with the top managers of this forward looking feminist group that the BSD Syndrome was fine-tuned with their contribution, from just noting the “baggage” as a characteristic to the “Baggage System Dependency”.

What we firmly believe however is that we as men must take responsibility for male violence and do all in our power to reduce and eventually eliminate it from our society (**Violence by men against men, women, children and the environment**). If women choose to do or not do the same, they will bear the consequences of their action. We are **men not God**, so judgment is not ours to pass

Please keep in touch Bert and forgive this long Email.  
Donald Berment, Secretary MAVAW